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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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KEERD

July 21, 1949

TO: District Director, New York, New York

FROM: INVESTIGATIONS SECTION, New York, New York 0300-262319 Part 0

H.R. 1593 and H.R. 1812 have been introduced for the relief of 84 Estonians.

This investigation is predicated upon Central Office request contained in Central Office memorandum dated March 26, 1949, file A-6971808 for an inquiry in accordance with O.I. 650.3.I.

ELMAR KEERD, the subject of this file, appeared before a Board of Special Inquiry at Ellis Island on September 30, 1948, and made the following sworn statement. He testified that he was born in Lartu, Estonia, on March 23, 1912, and that he is a citizen of Estonia. He further testified that he is married, but that he has been separated from his wife. She is presumably now residing in Estonia and there is no possibility of her joining her husband in the United States. Keerd further stated that he was a jurist in his native country from May 1939 up until the end of 1940. He further stated that he was one of a party of Estonians that left Sweden on a ship Prolific for the United States and stopping at England, Spain, and Madeira, without having applied for entry at any of those places. He stated that he was sent to Germany while serving as a Lieutenant with the Estonian Army under German control in 1944; that he remained in Germany from January 1945 to May 1945; later was interned by the Czech authorities after the capitulation of Germany. On June 3, 1945 he was sent to Zittau, Germany, located in the Russian Zone; and on June 10, 1945 he escaped to the American Zone. He later lived in Chemnitz, Germany, and later in displaced persons camps in Wurtemberg and Hamburg; and on March 7, 1947 he proceeded to Sweden. After his arrival in Sweden he was employed in a textile factory. Subject further stated that he never made application for a visa to enter the United States because the quota was probably oversubscribed by a great number. The subject expressed a great dislike

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for totalitarian forms of government, and he also expressed approval of the democratic form of government which exists in the United States.

The subject appeared at this office on April 26, 1945 and made substantially the same statements as those made before the Board of Special Inquiry. He added, however, that he believed his parents are still residing in Estonia, but he has not heard from them since 1947 when he was in Sweden. He further added that he considers himself divorced in view of the fact that when the Russians overran Estonia they promulgated a law whereby all married women in that country whose husbands were not in the country were forced to apply for a divorce, and that his wife did apply for such a divorce and that she lived with another man, and that under the Russian Laws that divorce is considered a legal divorce.

Information on file indicates that the subject was excluded from admission on September 30, 1948 by a Board of Special Inquiry as an immigrant not in possession of an unexpired immigration visa, and that subject appealed to the Commissioner from the excluding decision of the Board of Special Inquiry.

On December 8, 1948 the Commissioner affirmed the excluding decision of the Board of Special Inquiry, and also on the additional grounds that the subject is an alien not in possession of a passport or other document in lieu thereof as required under the Act of May 22, 1918 and Executive Order 8766 of June 3, 1941, and regulations made pursuant thereto. The subject appealed the excluding decision of the Commissioner to the Board of Immigration Appeals on December 13, 1948.

On December 10, 1948 the Central Office authorized the subject's parole on \$500 bond, and on December 24, 1948 bond was posted and the subject was paroled to the National Lutheran Council of 231 Madison Avenue, New York City, New York;

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MR. MICHAEL ALLIK, owner of the Manhattan Waterproofing Company, 319 Pearl Street, New York, New York, was interviewed at his place of business on June 21, 1949. He stated that the subject had been in his employ for a period of about two months up to approximately June 6, 1949, at which time he was laid off because of a seasonal slack in business; Mr. Allik further stated that the subject's services were considered satisfactory, and that he considered the subject to be a person of excellent moral character. In view of the fact that the subject was only learning the waterproofing trade, it was necessary that he be laid off prior to more experienced men on the payroll.

On June 21, 1949 MISS MESARG, Secretary to the Plant Superintendent, Steinway & Sons Piano Company, of Long Island City, New York, stated that the subject was employed by that firm from February 7, 1949 to March 18, 1949. The subject was employed in the sizing and scraping department. His services were considered to be satisfactory and he was considered to be of good moral character. The subject left of his own accord to seek advancement elsewhere.

MR. BORIS REA, President of the Estonian Educational Society, 241 East 34th Street, New York, New York, was interviewed on June 28, 1949. He stated that he has known the subject since shortly after his release from Ellis Island in December of 1948, and that the subject was a person of good moral character. Mr. Rea was unable to furnish any information concerning the subject's background.

MR. RONALD TYTAN, Manager of Charles & Company, grocers, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, New York, interviewed on June 28, 1949. He stated that the subject was employed by him for a period of about two weeks as a packer in the early part of 1949, and that the subject resigned to seek employment elsewhere. Mr. Tytan considered the person to be a subject of good moral character and to be a person of trust. He was unable to furnish any information concerning the subject's background except that he knew the subject in company with others entered

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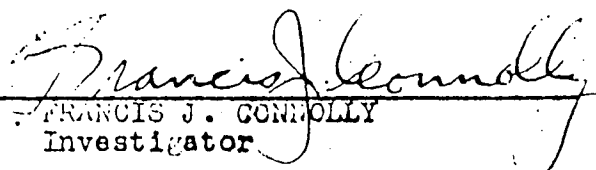
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the United States illegally. Mr. Tytan further stated that in view of his limited knowledge of the subject, he hesitated to make any recommendations on his behalf.

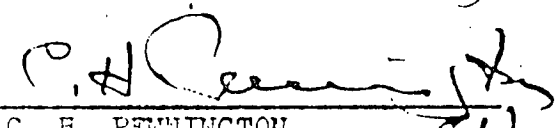
MR. JOSEPH GRITMAN, Superintendent of the premises at 242 East 34th Street, New York, New York, was interviewed on June 27, 1949. He stated that the subject formerly resided at that address and that he had moved out about May 27, 1949. Mr. Gritman knew very little concerning the personal background of the subject. However, he stated, based on the subject's residence at that address he considered him to be a person of good moral character. He further stated that he knew the subject denounced Communism, and it was Mr. Gritman's belief that the subject would make a good citizen of the United States if granted the opportunity to do so.

On July 19, 1949, MRS. J. J. COFFEY, Acting Supervisor of the Placement Service, National Lutheran Council, 13 East 22nd Street, New York, New York, advised that the subject has been reporting regularly to the National Lutheran Council as required under the conditions of his parole. The file also contains evidence that the subject has been regularly informing this Service as to his place of residence and employment. At the present time the subject is living at 15 South 12th Avenue, Mount Vernon, New York.

It is recommended that triplicate copies of this report be forwarded to the Central Office marked for the special attention of Mr. Edw. J. Shaughnessy, Special Assistant to the Commissioner. It is further recommended that triplicate copies of the sworn statement dated April 26, 1949, and duplicate copies of the Board of Special Inquiry hearing, and the alien fingerprint chart be forwarded to the Central Office.


FRANCIS J. CONNOLLY
Investigator

Forwarded:


C. H. PENNINGTON,
Chief, Investigations Section